Import of raw cashewnuts during the last three years is given below:

| Year | Import of Raw cashewnut | |
|---|---|---|
| | Metric Tonne | Rupes Crores |
| 2002-03 | 400659 | 836.57 |
| 2003-04 | 452398 | 1400.93 |
| 2004-05 | 578884 | 2183.26 |

(Source: Cashew Export Promotion Council)

(b) and (c) In order to improve the quality of cashew kernels to meet requirements of international standards, the Department of Commerce, through the Cashew Export Promotion Council, is imptementing on a continuing basis an integrated scheme for improving cashew kernel quality which includes setting up/improving the facilities for cashew kernals in value added Form/Consumer Packs, quality up gradation by process improvement, implementation of internationally accepted certification scheme and introduction of Flexi Pouch Vacuum Packing System. Under the scheme, financial assistance is provided to cashew kernel exporters. The Ministry of Food Processing Industries is also operating Plen Schemes under which assistance is provided for setting up/expansion/ modernization of food processing units.

(d) In order to ensure growth of export of agro-products, the Government, through the Commodity Boards/Authorities and Export Promotion Councils have been providing assistance for conducting publicity campaigns, 3ket surveys, sending delegations abroad, participating in international trade fairs, inviting potential buyers besides providing financial assistance for improving quality, packaging, brand promotion of the products etc.

**Steps to improve balance of trade with ASEAN**

*305. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that steep import tariffs slapped by Association of South East Asian Nation (ASEAN) have been disturbing India's trade balance with them;

(b) if so, details thereof and reasons therefor; and

(c) steps being taken to improve the balance of trade with ASEAN?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) No, Sir, ASEAN has not slapped steep import tariff on India. Import duty being charged by ASEAN countries from India is the same as is being charged by them from other WTO member countries except from those with whom they have a preferential trade agreement.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Promotion of bilateral trade is an ongoing and continuous effort of the Government. Trade promotion measures like participation in trade fairs, organizing buyer-seller meet etc. are being undertaken. Exporters are also being sensitized to the business opportunities in ASEAN countries. A comprehensive economic cooperation agreement with ASEAN is also under negotiation to provide greater 3ket access to our goods and services.

**Threats of terrorist attacks on tourist destinations**

*312. SHRI ANAND SHARMA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to threat of terrorist attacks on popular tourist destinations and resorts in the country; and

(b) if so, the steps taken to ensure security of such resorts to ensure safety of the tourists?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SHRIPRAKASH JAISWAL): (a) and (b) There have been no specific reports of threat of terrorist attacks on popular tourist destinations and resorts in the country.

However, the State Governments/UT Administrations are sensitized from time to time about threats from terrorist groups for appropriate action.